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THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

THE PACIFIC
COAST MEETING
OF THE AMERICAN
ORNITHOLOGISTS'
UNION

For the first time in the history of the organization, a regular congress of the American Ornithologists' Union has convened in western

North America. On Monday evening, May 17, 1915, the Thirty-third Stated Meeting of the Union was called to order in the rooms of the California Academy of Sciences, in San Francisco. This, the formal session of the Fellows, was devoted to the transaction of general business. Dr. A. K. Fisher presided, with the following Fellows present: Dr. Jonathan Dwight, of New York; Dr. A. K. Fisher, of Washington; Professor W. K. Fisher, of Stanford; Dr. Joseph Grinnell, of the University of California; Mr. Leverett M. Loomis, of San Francisco; Mr. Joseph Mailliard, of San Francisco; Dr. T. S. Palmer, of Washington; Dr. C. Hart Merriam, of Washington; Mr. John H. Sage, of Portland, Connecticut; Dr. Witmer Stone, of

Philadelphia; and Mr. Otto Widmann, of St. Louis.

On the following three days the public sessions, those of general interest, were held in a centrally located auditorium on the Exposition grounds. There was an average attendance of 50 members of the A. O. U. and of the Cooper Ornithological Club, with many visitors. The following program of papers was presented.

Tuesday forenoon, May 18.

1. "Notes on the Life-history of Penguins, with Special Reference to the Origin of Certain Instincts"; with superb lantern slides; by Robert Cushman Murphy, of Brooklyn.

2. "Oregon Bird-life in Motion Pictures"; the latest successes in motion photography; by William L. Finley, of Portland, Oregon.

Lunch was served to the A. O. U. and their friends at the Inside Inn, on the Exposition Grounds.

Tuesday afternoon, May 18.

3. "Philadelphia to the Coast in Early Days, and the Development of Ornithology Prior to 1850"; by Dr. Witmer Stone, of Philadelphia.

4. "In Memoriam—Theodore Nicholas Gill"; by Dr. T. S. Palmer, of Washington.

5. "The Migration of Albatrosses and Petrels"; by Mr. Leverett Mills Loomis, of San Francisco; discussion by Dr. T. S. Palmer, and Messrs. Murphy, Nichols and Loomis.

6. "A Late Nesting Record for the California Woodpecker"; by Mrs. Harriet Williams Myers, of Los Angeles.

7. "The Average Age of the Herring Gull"; by Mr. John Treadwell Nichols, of New York City.

Dinner in the evening for all members of the A. O. U. and C. O. C., and their invited friends, at the Cliff Hotel. Between fifty and sixty were present and the occasion was a most happy one.

Wednesday forenoon, May 19.

8. "Puzzling Immature Plumages of Some Birds"; by Dr. Jonathan Dwight, of New York City; discussion by Messrs. Loomis and Dwight.

9. "The Shore-birds of California"; illustrated by a long series of artistic lantern slides; by W. Leon Dawson, of Santa Barbara.

10. "The Pacific Coast Races of *Thryomanes bewickii*"; by Mr. Harry S. Swarth, of Los Angeles; read by title.

Lunch served to the A. O. U. and C. O. C. at the Chinese restaurant in the Food Products building.

Wednesday afternoon, May 19.

11. "Birds of the Grand Canyon, Arizona"; by Dr. T. S. Palmer, of Washington.

12. The Salisbury wild life motion pictures, presented, with comments, by Dr. Harold C. Bryant, of Berkeley.

13. "Farallon Island Bird Life"; in motion picture; by Mr. Paul J. Fair, of Oakland.

14. "Niche of the California Thrasher"; by Dr. Joseph Grinnell, of Berkeley. Discussion by Dr. T. S. Palmer, Mrs. Myers, and Messrs. Dawson and Grinnell.

Thursday forenoon, May 20.

15. "The Genus Problem in Present Day Nomenclature"; an able discussion of a pressing problem; by Dr. Witmer Stone, of Philadelphia.

16. "The Work of the National Association of Audubon Societies"; by Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, of New York City.

17. "Two Characteristic California Waders: the Black-necked Stilt and the Snowy Plover"; with lantern slides; by Mr. Tracy I. Storer, of Berkeley; remarks by Messrs. Murphy, Dawson and Joseph Mailliard.

18. "Food Habits of the Roadrunner"; by Dr. Harold C. Bryant, of Berkeley.

19. "History of the Bohemian Waxwing in British Columbia"; by Mr. Ernest M. Anderson; read by title.

On Thursday afternoon a portion of the visiting delegates were conducted to the summit of Mt. Tamalpais. Others visited the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at Berkeley. On Friday an all-day excursion on the U. S. Fish Commission ship, Albatross, was enjoyed by over eighty members and friends of the two ornithological societies. Snap shots of some of the participants are presented on the last two pages of this issue of THE CONDOR. On Saturday the convention disbanded. A number of the A. O. U. people went to the Yosemite Valley where some of them listened for the first time to the thrilling notes of the Canyon Wren and Water Ouzel.

The above brief outline of happenings at the A. O. U. Congress can give but a faint idea of the atmosphere of the occasion. The setting at the Exposition was unique and doubtless will never be duplicated. We voice the hope, however, that it may become the custom to hold an A. O. U. Congress on the Pacific Coast regularly in the future, say every fifth year.

PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

SPENCER | FULLERTON BAIRD | A BIOGRAPHY | including selections from his correspondence | with Audubon, Agassiz, Dana, and others | By | WILLIAM HEALEY DALL, A. M., D. Sc. | with nineteen illustrations | [vignette] | Philadelphia & London | J. B. Lippincott Company | 1915 ["published April"]; pp. xvi + 462, 19 unnumbered plates. (\$3.50.)

The book of the above title is of more than ordinary interest to western bird students. Baird was intimately identified with the scientific operations of the Pacific Railroad Surveys and with the publication of

the results of those operations. The wealth of biographical detail collected by Dr. Dall concerning Professor Baird thus provides a great number of facts relative to the early history of ornithology in our western states.

The book contains many letters written by the notable naturalists of the times, and many interesting side-lights are thereby thrown upon the relationships and characters of these men. Baird himself was evidently the inspiring genius of his period. Practically every important achievement in the field of vertebrate zoology seemed to have been either initiated by him or prominently fostered by him.

We owe a very great deal to Dr. Dall for his expenditure of labor in making available a full account of Baird's life and activities. This is the one biography of recent publication that has appealed to the reviewer as most emphatically worth reading. The present-day naturalist, young and old alike, cannot fail to get inspiration as well as enjoyment out of it.—J. GRINNELL.

BIRDS OF NEW YORK, by ELON HOWARD EATON. Part 2. General Chapters; Land Birds. 1914 (our copy received March 20, 1915). Pp. 1-719, pls. 43-106. (For full title and review-notice of Part 1, see CONDOR, XII, 1910, p. 207.)

As with Part 1, the prominent feature of this elaborate state publication lies in its illustrations. There are colored plates, representing nearly every species of bird indigenous to New York, from the brush of L. A. Fuertes. These have been reproduced for the most part with marked success.

The text treatment of species is necessarily not exhaustive. The descriptions are brief, and properly so where colored plates are so bounteously provided as in the present book. "Distribution" and "Haunts and habits" naturally relate almost wholly to the state concerned.

Of general interest are the introductory chapters. These bear titles as follows: Bird ecology; the economic value of birds; the status of our bird laws; Special measures for increasing bird life; Bird refuges; Private preserves. Under these captions the various matters are impartially discussed, the conclusions according for the most part with the results of experience elsewhere. As means of increasing bird population, Eaton gives first importance to the erection of artificial nesting sites, this with due regard to the predilections of English Sparrows and house cats. The planting of food-producing trees, and the provision of watering places during the summer, are also recommended.

With so comprehensive a work on its ornithology, New York State takes front rank as a commonwealth which recognizes the importance of supplying its schools and libraries with adequate treatises upon its natural history.—J. GRINNELL.